

First time in 22 years, ESI contribution slashed from 6.5% to 4%

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JUNE 13

IN THE first such move since 1997, the rate of contribution under the Employees' State Insurance (ESI) Act has been reduced from 6.5 per cent to 4 per cent, the government said in a statement issued Thursday.

While the employer's contribution has been reduced from 4.75 per cent to 3.25 per cent, that of the employee is down from 1.75 per cent to 0.75 per cent. The reduced rates, which will come into effect from July 1, is expected to benefit 3.6 crore employees and 12.85 lakh employers.

The reduction in rates, the statement said, would "facilitate further enrolment of workers under the ESI scheme and bring more and more workforce into the formal sector".

"Similarly, reduction in the share of contribution of employers will reduce the financial liability of the establishments leading to improved viability... This shall also lead to enhanced Ease of Doing Business. It is also expected that reduction in rate of ESI contribution shall lead to improved compliance of law," it said.

Those covered under the scheme, along with their families, can avail "reasonable medical, surgical and obstetric treatment"

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LEADERS MEET AHEAD OF SCO SUMMIT IN KYRGYZ REPUBLIC CAPITAL

Pak has to create atmosphere free of terror, don't see it happening: PM to Xi

'Bank of China in India, Azhar listing proof of improving Sino-Indian ties'



EXPRESS IN BISHKEK
SHUBHAJIT ROY
BISHKEK, JUNE 13

LESS THAN a month-and-a-half after Jaish-e-Mohammad chief Masood Azhar was listed as a global terrorist once Beijing lifted its technical hold, Prime Minister Narendra Modi Thursday told Chinese President Xi Jinping that he has made efforts to initiate peace with Pakistan, but his efforts have been "derailed".

Modi, who met Xi for a bilateral meeting at the State residence Al-Archa in Bishkek ahead of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation's summit in the Kyrgyz Republic capital, said Pakistan needs to create an atmosphere "free of terrorism", but at this stage, Delhi has not seen that from Islamabad's side. Briefing reporters after the meeting, Foreign Secretary Vijay Gokhale said, "There was a very brief discussion on Pakistan. PM



INSIDE

INDIA WILL NOT SIGN OFF ON CHINA'S BRI AT BISHKEK

MODI TO BE CHIEF GUEST AT RUSSIA ECONOMIC MEET P 8

said that we have a consistent position with respect to Pakistan. We discuss all issues through a bilateral mechanism and we look for peaceful settlement

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WITH PUTIN AND XI: The two photos Modi posted on Instagram after his meetings in Bishkek, Thursday

Modi, Imran sit across dinner table, don't talk to each other

SHUBHAJIT ROY
BISHKEK, JUNE 13

HERE FOR the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation summit, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Pakistan counterpart Imran Khan sat across the table at a dinner at the Frunze restaurant, but there was no exchange of pleasantries.

"Koi dua-salaam nahin hua (there was no exchange of pleas-

antries)," a source told *The Indian Express*, after the dinner. At the gala concert after the dinner at the Kyrgyz National Philharmonic, the two leaders sat in the front row, but were separated by at least seven leaders in between.

This was different from what had happened two years ago with then Pakistan PM Nawaz Sharif. In June 2017, more than 17 months after Modi met Sharif

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Pompeo for greater ties, trade talks: Modi hai to mumkin hai

SHUBHAJIT ROY
BISHKEK, JUNE 13

BORROWING Prime Minister Narendra Modi's election slogan, US Secretary of State Michael R Pompeo Thursday pushed for a deeper relationship with India ahead of his visit to Delhi on June

25-26, his first trip to the country after the new Modi government took charge.

"As Prime Minister Modi said in his latest campaign, 'Modi hai to mumkin hai,' or 'Modi makes it possible', I am looking forward to exploring what's possible between our people," Pompeo said in a major India policy speech at the India Ideas Summit of the US-India Business Council.

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Joint Secys from outside: How Govt found way to duck quota

SHYAMLAL YADAV
NEW DELHI, JUNE 13

AS THE government draws up an ambitious plan to hire from outside civil services at entry levels, an RTI application has revealed that while inducting talent from the private sector at the Joint Secretary level in April this year, the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) adopted a procedure which did not require it to provide for reservation to candidates from the Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST) and Other Backward Classes (OBC).

Relevant file notings provided by the DoPT to *The Indian Express* under the RTI Act state, "In a single post cadre, reservation does not apply. Since each post to be filled under this scheme is a Single Post, reservation is not applicable."

They are selected for different departments and if they were considered as a group of nine, there would have been at least two seats for OBCs and one seat for an SC candidate.

The nine candidates with JS rank cleared by the UPSC in April - Amber Dubey, Rajeev Saksena, Sujit Kumar Bajpayee, Dinesh Dayanand Jagdale, Kakoli Ghosh, Bhushan Kumar,

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AN EXPRESS RTI APPLICATION

EXPLAINED

From within and outside

THE GOVERNMENT'S decision to hire expertise and talent from outside is a bold step in administrative reform. The Joint Secretary level in the government is the decision-making stage. Parallel to this will be the demand for representation of SCs/STs and OBCs - just as in university appointments. The government will have to do this tightrope walk.

Arun Goel, Saurabh Mishra and Suman Prasad Singh - are likely to join soon.

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2 women steer moon mission: a 'simple girl' and an award winner

JOHNSON T A
BENGALURU, JUNE 13

"TO SHOW how challenging it was to achieve the correct cruise path, would be like going outside and hitting a golf ball towards a hole located in Los Angeles. The ball has to go straight into the hole and to make it more challenging, the hole is moving."

That was ISRO scientist Ritu Karidhal describing India's successful 2013-14 space mission to Mars in a TedxGateway talk.

Today, Karidhal is one of the two women at the helm of Chandrayaan 2, India's second foray to the moon that is preparing for launch on July 15. The other is Muthayya Vanitha.

Chandrayaan 2 will attempt a first-ever soft landing for India on the lunar surface. And the two senior women space scientists, both in their 40s, will be in



Ritu Karidhal, mission director of Chandrayaan 2

charge of the mission's main components: Project oversight and the crucial final phase of landing.

Karidhal, who holds a Master's degree in aerospace engineering from the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) and was a deputy operations manager for the Mars mission, is the mission director for Chandrayaan 2. Vanitha, an electronics systems engineer, is project director.

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Savarkar loses Veer as Cong rewrites school textbooks in Rajasthan

DEEP MUKHERJEE
JAIPUR, JUNE 13

WITHIN SIX months of taking charge, the Ashok Gehlot-led Congress government in Rajasthan has made several changes to school textbooks for students following the state board. The modifications relate to historical events and personalities, and to decisions taken by the NDA government in its first term.

The freshly-printed books for the Rajasthan Board of Secondary Education (RBSE)

have been distributed in the market by the Rajasthan State Textbook Board (RSTB). The changes were made following the recommendations made by the textbook review committee set up on February 13 this year to study if the earlier changes to school textbooks were made to fulfil political interests and distort history.

Consider this:
■ Description of Savarkar and his role in Class 12 History book.
■ OLD BOOK: Savarkar prefixed with 'Veer' in the chapter

on freedom movement. The portion extensively discusses the contribution of Savarkar in India's independence movement.

NEW BOOK: Savarkar addressed as 'Vinayak Damodar Savarkar'. It describes how Savarkar, troubled by the torture inflicted on him in the Cellular Jail by the British, called himself a 'son of Portugal' in his second mercy petition on November 14, 1911. He sent four mercy petitions to the British. Following his freedom, it says Savarkar worked

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Doctors' protest: Mamata talks tough, her colleague's daughter slams inaction

RAVIK BHATTACHARYA & SHRIYA DASGUPTA
KOLKATA, JUNE 13

BATTLELINES HARDENED Thursday in the snowballing agitation by doctors across West Bengal with Chief Minister and Trinamool leader Mamata Banerjee turning up the heat on them. And a medical student, daughter of Banerjee's powerful colleague Urban Development Minister Firhad Hakim going public with her "shame" as a Trinamool supporter at "the in-



Mamata at SSKM Hospital in Kolkata. Partha Paul

action and silence of our leaders". Banerjee gave an ultimatum to agitating junior doctors say-

ing that strong action would be taken against them if they do not get back to work promptly. But junior doctors and interns vowed to continue their "cease-work" until their demands for security were met. They have been on strike after angry relatives of a patient who died in the Nilratan Sircar Medical College and Hospital were joined by neighbours and local residents as they barged in and beat up doctors, injuring two of them.

On Thursday, violence erupted again as outsiders

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India to have its own space station: ISRO

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JUNE 13

INDIA PLANS to establish its own space station and the modalities will be worked out after its first manned space mission, Gaganyaan, is complete, ISRO chairman Dr K Sivan said Thursday.

"We want a separate space station. Our space station will be small. We will launch a small module of 20 tonnes for micro-gravity experiments. This is our ambition. Everyone starts with a small module and only later expands," he said at a press conference for the launch of India's ambitious Chandrayaan 2 project to the moon.



Chandrayaan-2 orbiter vehicle at an ISRO facility in Bengaluru. PTI

Sivan said ISRO is in the process of drawing up plans for the space station, which is likely to be ready in the next five to seven years. The space station will be placed in an orbit of 400 km

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WORLD



TWO TANKERS TARGETED NEAR STRAIT OF HORMUZ
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